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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#) [TW](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: KEY CHINESE ACADEMIC SEES CROSS-STRAIT TIES
STABILIZING

Classified By: Deputy Political Minister Counselor
Robert Griffiths. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) A leading Chinese commentator on foreign affairs disagreed with China's standard line on Taiwan and told visiting EAP/CM Director John Norris that from his perspective Chen Shui-bian is a diminishing threat to Beijing. After other scholars offered familiar points about the danger of Chen Shui-bian and Beijing's concerns about upcoming Taiwan elections, China Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of American Studies senior fellow Tao Wenzhao disputed that view and argued that cross-Straits ties are stabilizing. (Note: Tao is a frequent commentator on foreign policy issues on Chinese TV. End Note.)

¶2. (C) Tao argued that Chen Shui-bian's domestic support is dropping and that any of the leading candidates for the upcoming Presidential elections are likely to pursue cross-Straits policies more acceptable to Beijing. The majority of people on Taiwan agree with the present situation. After Chen steps down, Beijing will also be in a position to take more positive steps to improve cross-Straits relations, he argued.

¶3. (C) Tao likened the cross-Straits situation under Chen Shui-bian with China-Japan relations under Koizumi. Much as relations with Tokyo improved notably shortly after Koizumi left office, Tao felt that Beijing will be in a position to be more creative in its approach to cross-Straits ties once Chen leaves office.

RANDT